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Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND - U.S. ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS

REF:(A)STATE 042841, (B)WELLINGTON 02161, (C)STATE 111810

BEGIN SUMMARY: ON SHORT NOTICE DURING THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S WELLINGTON VISIT, OFFICIALS OF THE GNZ MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS REQUESTED AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET ON MAY 10 WITH AN APPROPRIATE MEMBER OF THE VP'S PARTY TO DISCUSS THE SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERIES AGENCY. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY (DAS) HEGINBOTHAM AGREED TO DO SO AND MET WITH AN MFA GROUP WHICH INCLUDED DEPUTY SECRETARY SCOTT, ASSISTANT SECRETARY BRYCE HARLAND, AND HEADS OF THE PACIFIC, ECONOMIC, AND LEGAL DIVISIONS. THIS TELEGRAM REPORTS ON AN ALMOST FERVENT PLEA, MADE BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARLAND AND ON BEHALF OF THE GNZ-USG ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS, BEFORE THE FISHERIES SUBJECT (REPORTED SEPTEL) WAS TAKEN UP. END SUMMARY.

1. GNZ OFFICIALS REQUESTED A BRIEF MEETING ON MAY 10 WITH A MEMBER OF THE VICE PRESIDENT'S TRAVELING PARTY TO DISCUSS SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL FISHERIES. DAS HEGINBOTHAM ACCEPTED. IN A BRIEF, SOMEWHAT EMOTIONAL OPENING STATEMENT, MFA ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARLAND
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APOLOGIZED FOR NOT TAKING UP FISHERIES STRAIGHT AWAY, BUT SAID THAT THE GNZ ATTACHES CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE JOINT ECONOMIC CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE. THESE ARE, FOR THE NEW ZEALANDERS, HE SAID, ALMOST THE ONLY OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGH LEVEL, PROFESSIONAL EXCHANGES IN WASHINGTON. THE MEETINGS ARE NOT SUPERFLUOUS AND THE MATTER NOT JUST ONE OF PRINCIPLE; THERE

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ARE A NUMBER OF SERIOUS, BILATERAL ISSUES WHICH WILL NOT GO AWAY BY OCTOBER, HE SAID. MINISTERIAL LEVEL DISCUSSIONS ARE FINE, BUT IN A PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM LIKE NEW ZEALAND'S, THEY ARE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR SENIOR, WORKING-LEVEL CONTACTS. THE GNZ MINISTERS ALL SHARE THAT POSITION, HARLAND CONCLUDED.

2. (DAS) HEGINBOTHAM ACKNOWLEDGED THE VALUE OF BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS BUT SAID THE QUESTION AS FAR AS WASHINGTON IS CONCERNED IS: WHAT LEVELS OF CONTACT? HARLAND REPLIED THAT THE GNZ WAS LOOKING TOWARD SECRETARY OR DEPUTY SECRETARY LEVEL TALKS. AS AN EXAMPLE, HE SAID GNZ SECRETARY OF TREASURY, N.V. LOUGH, AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GNZ'S DELEGRATION AT THE WORLD BANK/IMF TALKS WOULD BE PREPARED TO STAY ON "A BIT LONGER" TO MAINTAIN THEIR CONTACTS. IN FACT, HARLAND ADDED, THEY WOULD STAY IN WASHINGTON "AS LONG AS NECESSARY" TO MEET THE RIGHT, SENIOR-LEVEL PEOPLE.

3. DAS HEGINBOTHAM SAID HE AND OTHERS IN THE DEPARTMENT WILL LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITIES FOR THE TALKS BUT, IN FRANKNESS, THE CHANCES DID NOT APPEAR GOOD. HE SAID THE NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES AT THE SENIOR LEVELS HAS ESCALATED DRAMATICALLY. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE GNZ KEY ITS PLANNING FOR ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS TO "OTHER LEVELS AT OTHER TIMES."
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4. HARLAND'S CLOSING PLEA WAS THAT THE GNZ HAS NEVER INSISTED ON FULL RECIPROCITY FOR THESE OR ANY OTHER TALKS WITH THE USG. BOTH THE PRINCIPLE OF THE TALKS AND THE ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED ARE OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE TO NEW ZEALAND. HE ASKED THAT DAS HEGINBOTHAM TAKE THAT WORD BACK TO WASHINGTON AND THEN LET THE GNZ KNOW THE REPLY. HEALY

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